UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/C.5/52/31
10 December 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-second session
FIFTH COMMITTEE
Agenda items 116 and 45

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRM AND LASTING PEACE AND PROGRESS IN FASHIONING A REGION OF PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.31

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

A. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 2 to 11 of draft resolution A/52/L.31, the General Assembly would:

(a) Commend the efforts of the peoples and Governments of the Central American countries to re-establish peace and democracy throughout the region and promote sustainable development by implementing the agreements adopted at the summit meetings, and support the decision of the presidents that Central America should become a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development;

(b) Emphasize the importance of the global frame of reference and the establishment of national and regional development priorities as the basis for promoting the effective, consistent and sustainable progress of the Central American peoples, and for providing international cooperation in accordance with the new circumstances in and outside the region;

(c) Recognize the need to continue to follow closely the situation in Central America in order to support national and regional efforts to overcome the underlying causes that have led to armed conflicts, avoid reversals and consolidate peace and democratization in the area, and promote the objectives of the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America;

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(d) Welcome the signing of the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace (A/51/796-S/1997/114, annex II) and the entry into force of the other agreements concluded during the peace process between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), as well as the progress achieved in implementing those agreements, and urge all sectors of Guatemalan society to join efforts and work with courage and determination to consolidate peace in keeping with the spirit and letter of the Peace Agreements;

(e) Request the Secretary-General, the bodies and programmes of the United Nations, and the international community to continue to support and verify in Guatemala the implementation of all the peace agreements signed under United Nations auspices, compliance with which is an essential condition for a firm and lasting peace in that country, and to provide their resolute support for the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) in the fulfilment of its mandate;

(f) Recognize the importance of the Central American Integration System as the necessary legal and institutional body for coordinating and harmonizing efforts to achieve economic, social, cultural, environmental and political integration of the Central American countries in accordance with the goals and priorities established by the Governments of the Isthmus in order to consolidate peace and democratization, and call upon the international community, the United Nations system and other international governmental and non-governmental organizations to provide generous and effective cooperation with a view to improving the competence and efficiency of the Central American Integration System in the fulfilment of its mandate;

(g) Encourage the Central American Governments to continue to carry out their historic responsibilities by fully implementing the commitments they have assumed under regional or national agreements, especially the commitments to implement the social programme to overcome poverty and unemployment, establish a more just and equitable society, improve public safety, consolidate a modern and transparent public administration, and eliminate corruption, impunity, acts of terrorism and drug and arms trafficking; all these are necessary and urgent measures for establishing a firm and lasting peace in the region;

(h) Reiterate its deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, his special representatives, the groups of friends for the peace processes in El Salvador (Colombia, Mexico, Spain, United States of America and Venezuela) and Guatemala (Colombia, Mexico, Norway, Spain, United States of America and Venezuela), the support group for Nicaragua (Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden), the political dialogue and cooperation with the European Union, and also to other cooperating countries and the international community in general for its support and solidarity in the building of peace, democracy and development in Central America;

(i) Reaffirm the importance of international cooperation, in particular cooperation with the bodies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and the donor community in the new stage of consolidating peace and democracy in Central America, and urges them to continue to support Central American efforts to achieve those goals, bearing in mind the global framework of the new regional

development strategy, which is in keeping with the collective aspirations and needs of the Central American peoples;

(j) Request the Secretary-General to continue to lend his full support for the initiatives and activities of the Central American Governments, particularly their efforts to consolidate peace and democracy through the implementation of a new, comprehensive sustainable development programme, and the initiative to establish the Central American Union, and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

B. Relationship of the requests to the approved programme of work

2. The above request is related to subprogramme 1.1 Prevention, control and resolution of conflicts, of programme 1, Political affairs, of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 (A/51/6/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Corr.1).

C. Activities by which the request would be implemented

3. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would, with respect to the requests outlined in paragraph 1 above:

(a) Continue to support and verify in Guatemala the implementation of the comprehensive peace agreements signed under the auspices of the United Nations, the fulfilment of which is an essential condition for a firm and lasting peace in Guatemala;

(b) Actively provide support to MINUGUA in the discharge of its expanded verification mandate. These activities would include the continued provision of good offices, as required, as well as of substantive support and political guidance to MINUGUA;

(c) Continue to provide support to the small political unit in El Salvador which is following up on the outstanding elements of the peace accords. This unit, which is under the administrative structure of the United Nations Development Programme, is financed by existing monies in the Trust Fund for the Urited Nations Mission in El Salvador;

(d) Continue to give the fullest possible support to the initiatives and activities of the Governments of the Central American countries, including support for their efforts to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

D. Additional requirements at full cost

4. At its forty-sixth and forty-seventh sessions, the General Assembly authorized provisions for two staff (one P-5 and one General Service) for 1992 and 1993 pursuant to resolutions 46/109 A of 17 December 1991 and 47/118 of 18 December 1992 respectively. Reflecting the expanded support activities

required under resolution 48/161 of 20 December 1993 and 49/137 of 19 December 1994, the General Assembly authorized for 1995 the continuation of the arrangement and the addition of one Professional staff member at the P-4 level to assist in the Central American peace process. In view of the continued support activities required under resolution 50/132 of 20 December 1995 and 51/198 B of 27 March 1996, the General Assembly authorized the continuation of these provisions in 1996 and 1997 and consequentially the related appropriations were approved.

5. As evidenced in the reports of the Secretary-General on this item (A/52/330, A/52/344 and A/52/554), the Secretary-General remains closely involved in the peace process in Central America. There is a continued need for United Nations support for the efforts of the Central American countries to promote and consolidate their progress towards peace, freedom, democracy and development. In particular, the expansion of MINUGUA's verification role in Guatemala would require overall coordination, backstopping and support. It should be borne in mind that the expanded verification role of MINUGUA covers a package of agreements signed by the Government of Guatemala and URNG, which include detailed commitments on political, legislative, social, economic, agrarian, ethnic, military and public security issues, which are bound together into a national peace agenda.

6. It is anticipated that, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the activities outlined in paragraph 3 above would require related resources equivalent to one staff each at the P-4 level and the General Service level to assist in all aspects of the Secretary-General's involvement in the Central American peace process, particularly in Guatemala.

7. The Political Affairs Officer (P-4) would be specifically assigned to provide backstopping, support and political guidance in relation to MINUGUA's expanded duties of verification of the comprehensive peace agreements in Guatemala. The Officer would also provide support to the small political unit in El Salvador which is to follow up on the outstanding elements of the peace accords and which is to be funded by the Trust Fund for the United Nations Mission in El Salvador. The Officer would also assist, as appropriate, in supporting efforts and activities to consolidate peace and democracy in Central America, particularly in connection with activities of subregional organizations in these areas. The General Service staff member would provide research assistance, administrative backstopping and secretarial support.

8. The estimated costs related to the salaries and common staff costs of the staff mentioned in paragraph 7 above would amount to $173,800.

9. No provisions have been made in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 related to the provision of additional staff required to support the Secretary-General's continuing efforts in this area.

E. Contingency fund

10. As the activities related to the Central American peace process are of an extraordinary nature they should be dealt with, as was done on previous

occasions, outside the procedures related to the contingency fund, as provided for in paragraph 11 of annex I to General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986.

F. Action required by the General Assembly

11. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/52/L.31, an additional appropriation of $173,800 would be required under section 3 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. An additional appropriation of $32,300 would also be required under section 32, Staff assessment, to be offset by a corresponding amount under Income section 1, Income from staff assessment.